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Excavations and surveys in Israel

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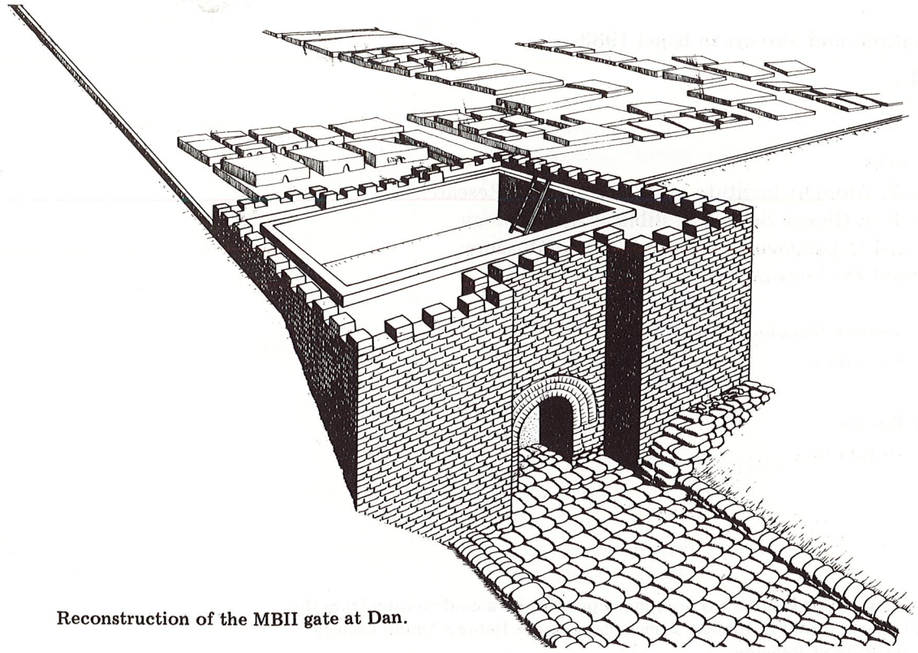

Reconstruction of the MBII gate at Dan.

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The walls were constructed of ashlar on the outside and small fieldstones on the inside. Most of the ashlars had dressed margins and rough bosses and a few had double bosses. The fort is dated to the 5th—6th centuries CE.

QEDESH, ROMAN TEMPLE — 1983

The second season of excavations in the Roman temple at Qedesh took place in July 1983 under the direction of A. Ovadiah, M. Fischer and I. Roll on behalf of the Institute of Archaeology and the Department of Classical Studies, Tel Aviv University, with the assistance of M. Aviam and A. Amitay from the Mt. Meiron Field School. G. Solar surveyed and prepared the plans.

The cella (the principal chamber of a classical temple). Here, the apse in which stood the statue or relief of the god is now completely exposed. It was attached to the west wall of the *cella* and was built at a later stage than the temple. Curved building blocks found in the apse, which must have fallen when it collapsed, make the reconstruction of the arch impossible.

The portico and courtyard. Here, bases of additional columns and the northern part of the portico's stylobate were uncovered. The layout of the paving slabs indicates that they formed a *dromos* (a paved way) which connected the eastern gate of the *peribolos* (sacred precinct wall) with the portico of the temple and was perhaps used as a processional way. Various architectural elements were found on the courtyard floor, some of which may have formed part of the portico entablature. These include fragments of decorated cornices, column drums, a monolithic column (in addition to the two discovered in the first season), a fine Corinthian capital with three-dimensional acanthus leaves, etc.

The ascent to the threshold of the central entrance to the *cella* seems to have been by means of a wooden staircase or ramp resting on the threshold. The square holes in the upper part of the threshold front may indicate that the ramp was fixed to it by nails.

The peribolos. The main gateway of the *temenos* (sacred enclosure) was partly exposed in the eastern wall of the *peribolos*. Three building phases, from the 2nd and 3rd centuries CE, could be distinguished in the gateway, which was built on the same axis as the central entrance to the *cella*. Nearby, among other finds, two Corinthian pilaster capitals came to light, which can be attributed to the 3rd century CE on the evidence of their style and of the elaboration of the acanthus leaves.

RAMAT HASHARON

A mosaic floor was discovered next to a house in Ramat Hasharon and was excavated on behalf of the Department of Antiquities by S. Pipano in December 1982.

Excavations revealed a white mosaic floor forming part of a round installation, of which only the east side has been preserved (0.5 × 1.2 m). The wall of this installation (preserved height 0.15 m) is built of limestone and *kurkar* blocks joined with lime mortar and lined on the inside

with a layer of ribbed sherds from the late Roman or Byzantine period (4th—6th centuries CE) covered with plaster.

RAS EL-KHARUBBE (ANATHOTH)

A salvage excavation was conducted at Ras el-Kharubbe near Jerusalem during a fortnight in June-July 1983 by A. Biran on behalf of the Nelson Glueck School of Biblical Archaeology and the Staff Officer for Archaeology in Judea and Samaria, assisted by Malka Hershkovitz and R. Greenberg (area supervisors), Gila Cook (surveyor), Malka Hershkovitz and Dalia Pakman (pottery research) and Nili Cohen (restoration).

The hill (spot height 748) is situated about 2 km northeast of Mt. Scopus and was investigated by A. Bergman (Biran) in 1936. Since then, houses have been built on the site and at its foot, but the bare rock is still visible in most of the area and here and there openings of caves and pits can be seen. The lower part of the hill is terraced, but here too the rock is visible everywhere.

Two soundings were made on the east side of the hill; on the upper terrace, an installation and a rock-hewn pit were uncovered, as well as a stone wall. The pit was found full of debris and sherds; the function of the installation could not be determined. The sounding on a lower terrace, about 20 m to the east, reached bedrock at a depth of 0.5 m.

In Area A, on the upper southern slope, about 7 m of a wall 1 m wide were uncovered. Its southern face is built of large blocks, while small stones were used for the northern face and the fill. This could perhaps be a terrace wall, although the bare rock was exposed on both its sides. On the surface, the wall could be traced eastwards for about 14 m. At that point, a square (2.50 × 2.65 m) was excavated and it became clear that the wall was founded on an earlier rock-cut pit filled with earth and small stones.

In Area B (the hilltop) a structure combining masonry with the natural rock was uncovered, perhaps representing the remains of some farm building. Several rooms were cleared. The north wall, of which 9 m were excavated (height 1.1 m), is built of medium-sized stones and the natural rock. There is evidence that a cave exists behind it. Some of the walls stand on a wide stone foundation, perhaps the remains of an earlier structure. Other walls have no foundation and the rock is incorporated into the wall. A floor of crushed limestone mixed with yellow mud was uncovered in the two central rooms at a depth of 1.5 m below the surface. The layer of ashes on this floor contained many sherds including store jars, cooking pots, juglets and lamps. Several rock-cut installations were found in these rooms, one of which may be a treading surface.

The excavations and the survey yielded numerous sherds of the Hellenistic (second half of the 2nd and early 1st centuries BCE) and the Persian (5th—4th centuries BCE) periods and a few of the end of the Israelite period, but no building remains of this period were found. Most of the Hellenistic pottery consists of amphorae fragments, as well as of jugs, juglets, cooking pots, bowls and lamps. The fill beneath the floors contained Persian and Hellenistic sherds.

The settlement at Ras el-Kharubbe reached its peak in the second half of the 2nd century and in the early 1st century BCE. The agricultural unit belongs to this time and includes domestic quarters, agricultural installations and cisterns. The Hellenistic building may be founded on a structure of the Persian period. The Israelite settlement must have been fairly small and unimportant, a fact which should be taken into account when it is proposed to identify this site with the biblical Anathoth.